

has multiplied the number of home ownership opportunities in Vermont many times over. This dedication to aggressively and compassionately provide affordable housing opportunities ensures that today's neediest Vermont families need not go without shelter.

As a Senator one of my highest priorities is to help secure for Vermont's low and moderate income families a home they can afford. We all know that having a home is a critical foundation to achieving success. Every year VHFA helps Vermonters build this foundation by making financing possible for thousands of Vermonters to purchase hundreds of dwellings. Over the years, VHFA has worked with private lenders, real estate professionals, builders, developers and nonprofit organizations throughout the state to get the job done. This dynamic approach to home financing has brought about dozens of healthy and safe Vermont communities where residents thrive and communities grow. The professionalism, reliability, and accomplishments of the staff at VHFA are unsurpassed.

I commend the Vermont Housing Finance Agency for its outstanding contribution and dedication to improving the quality of life for so many Vermonters. VHFA has my sincerest thanks and unending respect for its 25 years of commitment to Vermont and her people. I am both proud and honored to represent such an accomplished group of individuals in Washington as they are a national model for how to provide affordable, quality housing opportunities for those in need. As they celebrate their 25th anniversary at the end of this month in Vermont, the VHFA staff, past and present, should be proud that their leadership and continued perseverance will help ensure that every Vermonter has a place to call home.●

TRIBUTE TO THE EMTER FAMILY

● Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I rise today to take note of the superb performances given yesterday by the Emter family of Glen Ullin, North Dakota, on the Capitol lawn and later at the Kennedy Center. The Emters were here in Washington as part of the Millennium Series being sponsored by the Kennedy Center. When the Kennedy Center asked me to make a recommendation of a group from North Dakota that might exhibit some of the cultural heritage of my state, the Emter family was a natural and immediate choice.

One obvious reason was their outstanding musical accomplishment. The Emters are button accordionists. Mr. President, the button accordion is a unique instrument, brought to America by settlers from Austria at the turn of the 20th century. Button accordions have been in this country for nearly 100 years, and have helped make polka one

of America's most loved traditional dances. In North Dakota even today you'd be hard pressed to find a wedding reception or barn dance where a polka wasn't played and the entire room doesn't pour onto the dance floor. Accordion music may not have the popularity following that it did before the advent of rock and roll, but its lyrical and nostalgic flavor still tugs at the heartstrings of this Senator and many other folks of my generation who grew up watching our parents polka the night away across the American Legion Hall dance floor, at Ted Strand's barn or at Hardmeyer Hall.

The Emter Family—parents Renae and Roger (who met at a polka dance), 18 year old son Adam, and three daughters Angelina, 16; Alida, 15; and Abigail, 13—has performed all over North America, from county fairs, church functions and Oktoberfests to national television and radio appearances. They have taken top honors at a number of international button accordion competitions. They are truly accomplished.

I have to tell you though, Mr. President, that it isn't just for their musical achievement that the Emter Family deserves our recognition and honor today. That's because this is a great family. Their presence on stage tells you this, the way they interact with one another and everyone around them tells you this, the message in their music tell you this. They are good people that exemplify the steadfast, positive attitude of the vast majority of rural America's families. They live in Glen Ullin, in southwestern North Dakota, a part of the state that has seen one of the most significant decrease in population. Times are desperate for many families in this region of my state, along with rural areas in most of our farm states. These people have every reason in the world to lose faith, to have negative attitudes, to let frustration get the best of them and give up. None of us could fault them for that. But, Mr. President, most of these families don't despair. They look forward, they continue to work incredibly hard, they still pack the American Legion Hall to dance the polka once and awhile. The Emters are a symbol of hope in these areas of our country, Mr. President, and I want to thank them for sharing that hope with us yesterday through their music and their presence in Washington.●

JIM BATTIN COURTHOUSE

● Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to one of Montana's greatest citizens, the Honorable James F. Battin, Sr. Jim Battin was born in Wichita, Kansas, and at the age of four, moved to Billings, Montana, where he was raised. After graduating from high school, he served for three years in the U.S. Navy during World War II, spending most of that time in the Pacific

theater. Following the war, Jim returned home to continue his education, graduating first from Eastern Montana College in Billings and later receiving his J.D. from George Washington University. He continued his career in public service as a city attorney in Billings, and in 1958, he was elected to the Montana state legislature. Only two years later, he successfully ran for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, where he was quickly assigned seats on the House Committee on Committees, as well as Ways and Means, two very prestigious seats for a freshman member of Congress. Jim later served on the House Foreign Relations and Judiciary Committees, and was ultimately elected five times by the people of his district, which then covered the eastern half of the state of Montana. During his congressional career, which lasted from 1961 to 1969, Congressman Battin played an instrumental role in a good deal of legislation, including the bill which created Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness Area, at the time the largest wildlife area in the United States. Jim also served as one of two U.S. Congressional Representatives to the Inter-Governmental Committee on European Migration, which met in Geneva. This group helped individuals who were expelled from behind the Iron Curtain to re-establish businesses in other countries, or to find work in other occupations. In 1968, Congressman Battin was President Nixon's representative to the Platform Committee at the Republican National Committee, and shortly thereafter, in early 1969, he became President Nixon's first judicial appointment. He served as a U.S. district judge for the district of Montana for 27 years, becoming its Chief Judge in 1978. During his time on the bench, Judge Battin issued key rulings affecting the lives of Montana citizens, among them his ruling which preserved access to the Bighorn River for people throughout the state, and his creation of the precedent for the now universally accepted six-man federal jury in civil cases. A dedicated and hard working man, James F. Battin Sr. remained on the bench until his passing in the autumn of 1996.

It was with these facts in mind, Mr. President, that led to my support of H.R. 158, a bill which would designate the United States courthouse located at 316 North 26th Street in Billings, Montana, as the "James F. Battin United States Courthouse". Congress passed H.R. 158 earlier this year, and it was signed into law by the President on April 5th, 1999, as Public Law 106-11. I believe that the renaming of this courthouse, which Judge Battin presided over for so long, is the most fitting tribute that the United States Congress and the people of Montana can pay to this great man, whose outstanding career in public service